

U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service
U.S. Border Patrol - El Paso Sector
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NEWS RELEASE

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Alamogordo Agents Locate Cocaine Stash in Late Model SUV *Narcotics Found by Canine in Lead-lined False Compartment*

EL PASO, Texas -- Agents at the Highway 70 traffic checkpoint outside of Alamogordo, New Mexico discovered \$3.8 million dollars worth of cocaine Tuesday in a lead-lined false compartment of a 1999 Lincoln Navigator.

The 121.20-pound cocaine seizure, the largest for the El Paso Sector in recent memory, was being transported by a 24-year old legalized resident from Chihuahua. A Border Patrol canine confirmed agents' suspicions about inconsistencies in the texture and color of the vehicle under carriage. Once in secondary inspection, the canine quickly alerted on the cargo area of the SUV. Further investigation led to a lead-lined false compartment in the floor of the cargo area. Agents had to peel back the metal facing to reach 50 individual bundles of cocaine that was wrapped in brown shipping tape. Agents also located \$1,000 in suspected drug currency.

Agents say the subject was taking the cargo to Denver, Colorado. His wife and two sons were also traveling with him. He stated he was to be paid \$20,000 for taking the shipment to Colorado. A criminal history check on the subject was negative. The vehicle, currency, and contraband were turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Las Cruces for disposition.

Agents believe the cargo area was lined in lead in an attempt to avoid detection by x-ray equipment utilized at the International Port of Entry. The man and his family were planning to stop in Tularosa, New Mexico before continuing on to Colorado, according to reports.

~USBP~

*****Video of the seizure is available to all interested members of the media.***